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for a short time on her heavy burden-bearing journey. The official instanced this as showing what a strong race the Yunnan people are. He does not know the awful price that poor woman would have to pay in later years for her terrible experience. 000

Before we reached the water's edge we began to shout across to the other side, giving the captain of the ferry warning that our party would soon be wanting to be taken across to the Yunnan shores. We hoped that he would hear our shouts and be on the Nosu side to meet us as soon as we had finished our long climb down. Most Chinese ferrymen, expecting a good tip, would have done this readily. But as we neared the Yangtse waters we saw no signs of any response to our shouts. The boat was still tied up securely to the Yunnan bank, and there was no move whatever on the part of the ferry captain. This procedure considerably disconcerted us. At first we did not see through the plot, and were merely annoyed at the delay. Our escort wished to see us safely over the river and then were going to return up that hill past the danger zone that same night. We were anxious not to delay them unduly. It was very kind of them to come so far with us and we did not wish to trespass on their kindness any more.

The first hour passed fairly pleasantly, thinking that every ten minutes would see the captain hurrying along from the market town. After the first hour was over, and still there was no sign of the boatman, our men lost their temper and began roundly cursing all the ten thousand generations that had led up to the birth of the captain who refused to appear. I have usually found that the aboriginals, when they start swearing, do so in Chinese. Their own words have entirely failed by the side of the Chinese epithets, which express with a 177 192 195

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177 refined force or blunt coarseness the most terrible or horrible
192 curses a person in his wildest passion would wish to give
195 utterance to. A knowledge of the swear words of the
000 Chinese gives one an open window into their real thoughts and wishes. It is often said in extenuation that the Chinese use these terrible, filthy oaths without thought or understanding of their import. Such is not the case, for when two men or women really warm up to the fray it is like a closely fought game of chess when each antagonist meets the move of the other with a careful counter move of his own. They understand all too well what they say, and thrust and parry with the skill of practised gladiators.

We were kept waiting four hours at the ferry, unable to cross over the hundred yards that separated us from the safety of China proper.

Near by where we were waiting was a shingle beach, at the junction of a small stream with the Yangtse. Several of us went down to this beach, and, to while the time away, began throwing stones. This led on to talk about the stories that had gone abroad concerning the foreigner's prowess in stone-catching. Several of the party tried me again. Once more most of the stones proved quite easy of catch, for the men were too polite to pelt me in dead earnest. While we were enjoying the fun and killing the tedium of waiting for the immovable ferry, the men in the cave were watching, and from what they saw they came to the conclusion that the uncanny foreigner, whom rumour said a hundred men could not hit, had better be left alone. The simple fun of stone-throwing and stone-catching set alight the fires of the raiders' superstitions, and the signal was given that we were too strong to be attacked. True it is that fears as well as